

**2017 Montana Historic Preservation Award
for Outstanding Contribution to Historic Preservation to
Kirby Matthew**

**Mark Baumler
State Historic Preservation Officer
2017 Preservation Award Ceremony
Myrna Loy Center, Helena
January 20, 2017**

A 2017 award for Outstanding Contribution to Historic Preservation goes out to Kirby Matthew of Deer Lodge. Kirby, please come forward.

Kirby Matthew began his historic preservation career as an archaeologist for the Lolo and Bitterroot National Forests in the late 70s and 80s while he also attended school at the University of Montana in Missoula. He landed a permanent federal agency appointment with the Forest Service in 1991. Soon after in 1992, he was admitted into the National Park Service's Williamsport Historic Preservation Training Center in Maryland to obtain training in building preservation where he completed his certification in 1995. This professional education and training, combined with his previous hands-on construction experience has made Kirby a uniquely-qualified preservation carpenter. The value of his formal and practical education, and love and dedication to the craft has been critical to Kirby's credibility and success as a historic preservation expert and advocate.

Although primarily recognized for his employment with the Forest Service, Kirby also worked for the National Park Service, first at Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah, and later back in Montana at the Grant-Kohrs Ranch National Historic Site in Deer Lodge, upon his graduation from Williamsport. In 2000, appreciating his unique skill set, the Forest Service asked Kirby to return to serve as the lead to a team of historic building preservationists. In this role, Kirby led the team in their pursuit of restoring and rehabilitating historic buildings and structures across the West, often saving them from neglect, if not demolition. Since 2000, Kirby's team has completed over 150 historic preservation projects for the Forest Service, and an additional 25 projects for other federal agencies.

In addition to field work, Kirby was instrumental in the creation of two educational programs: the Region One Traditional Skills Program and the Preservation Skills Training Classes, both of which serve to pass along the knowledge and use of traditional tools, and the maintenance and repair of historic structures. Kirby was also an early advocate for the Forest Service Recreational Rental Program, whereby historic buildings are rented and used by the public. Numerous buildings restored by Kirby and his team garnered a second life through this program.

While “bricks and mortar” preservation work has dominated much of Kirby’s time, he has and continues to be a strong and vocal advocate for other facets of historic preservation. This includes his near-decade service as the historic preservation officer for the City of Deer Lodge; a role he continues to hold. And although Kirby technically “retired” in 2016, he still works part-time with the preservation team.

Kirby’s strong work ethic and high standards serve as a model for all government and private historic preservation projects. He is a highly respected professional and source of tremendous preservation knowledge for the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, State Historic Preservation Offices, as well as preservation partners throughout the West. Please join me in thanking Kirby Matthew with a 2017 Montana Historic Preservation Award for Outstanding Contribution to Historic Preservation in the State of Montana.